



Texas Original

Compassionate Cultivation

October 9, 2020

The Honorable Senfronia Thompson
Chair, House Public Health Committee
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768
RE: Interim Charge 1 related to Controlled Substances/Opioids

Dear Chairwoman Thompson,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this important topic. As you may already know, my company is one of three licensees in the Compassionate Use Program of Texas (CUP). We are the market leader in providing medicinal grade cannabis for patients suffering from an eligible diagnosis.

My reason for providing comment is to ask the Texas Legislature to look at providing medical cannabis as an “exit” drug for those addicted to opioids. This expansion of the Compassionate Use Act would help Texans live healthier, more productive lives and save the state billions of dollars in healthcare and criminal justice costs.

The following are a few facts regarding Texas I would like you to consider from 2018:

- There were 47.2 opioid prescriptions per 100 people in Texas (Source: CDC, US Prescribing Rates, 2018)
- There were \$20B in non-fatal opioid costs to state spanning healthcare, criminal and judicial, and workplace productivity costs. (Source: American Enterprise Institute, 2019)
- Four of the top 25 US cities for opioid abuse are Amarillo, Longview, Odessa and Texarkana. (Source: American Enterprise Institute, 2019)
- There were 1,402 overdose deaths involving opioids in Texas (Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse)

The following are facts from states where medical cannabis is allowed to be used as an alternative to opioids:

- There is a 14.4% reduction in opioid prescriptions in states with full medical cannabis (Source UGA)

- 41% of opioid users reported cessation or decreased opioid use due to medical cannabis (Source: NCBI)
- Patients using opioids for chronic pain decreased their use of opioids by 40%-60% when given access to medical cannabis (Source: A Pilot Study of a Medical Cannabis – Opioid Reduction Program, 2019, *American Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience*)

I do not wish to portray this as a solution to the opioid epidemic in Texas and I do not wish to convey that medical cannabis is a panacea. However, the numbers, the facts and the science clearly show the benefit to patients, the Texas economy and the state's budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Morris Denton
Chief Executive Officer
Texas Original Compassionate Cultivation
12701 Lowden Lane
Bldg 501
Menchaca, Tx 78652